



# Senate

General Assembly

**File No. 350**

February Session, 2024

Substitute Senate Bill No. 384

*Senate, April 9, 2024*

The Committee on Energy and Technology reported through SEN. NEEDLEMAN of the 33rd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

## **AN ACT CONCERNING THE LOW-INCOME ENERGY ADVISORY BOARD.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 16a-41b of the general statutes is repealed and the  
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2024*):

3 (a) There shall be a Low-Income Energy and Water Advisory Board  
4 which shall consist of the following members or their designees: (1) A  
5 representative of each electric and gas public service company  
6 designated by each such company; (2) the chairperson of the Public  
7 Utilities Regulatory Authority; (3) the Consumer Counsel; (4) the chief  
8 executive [director] officer of Operation Fuel; (5) the executive director  
9 of Infoline; (6) the director of the Connecticut Local Administrators of  
10 Social Services; (7) [the executive director of Legal Assistance Resource  
11 Center of Connecticut] a designee of Connecticut Legal Services, Inc.; (8)  
12 the Connecticut state director of AARP; (9) a designee of the Norwich  
13 Public Utility; (10) a designee of the Independent Connecticut

14 Petroleum Association; (11) two representatives of water companies as  
15 defined in section 25-32a, designated by the Connecticut Water Works  
16 Association; (12) the executive director of the Connecticut Fair Housing  
17 Center; (13) the executive director of the Center for Children's  
18 Advocacy; (14) the executive director of the Connecticut Green Building  
19 Council; and (15) two representatives of the community action agencies  
20 administering energy assistance programs under contract with the  
21 Department of Social Services, designated by the Connecticut  
22 Association for Community Action. The Secretary of the Office of Policy  
23 and Management and the Commissioners of Social Services and Energy  
24 and Environmental Protection, or their designees, shall serve as  
25 nonvoting members of the board.

26 (b) The Low-Income Energy and Water Advisory Board shall advise  
27 and assist the Office of Policy and Management and the Department of  
28 Social Services in the planning, development, implementation and  
29 coordination of energy-assistance-related programs and policies and  
30 low-income weatherization assistance programs and policies, shall  
31 advise the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection  
32 regarding the impact of utility rates and policies, and shall make  
33 recommendations to the General Assembly regarding (1) legislation and  
34 plans subject to legislative approval, and (2) administration of the block  
35 grant program authorized under the Low-Income Energy Assistance  
36 Act, as described in section 16a-41a, as amended by this act, to ensure  
37 affordable access to residential energy services to low-income state  
38 residents.

39 (c) The Low-Income Energy and Water Advisory Board may advise  
40 and assist the Office of Policy and Management, the Department of  
41 Social Services and the Department of Energy and Environmental  
42 Protection in the planning, development, implementation and  
43 coordination of water-assistance-related programs and policies,  
44 including programs and policies to alleviate the impact of utility rates,  
45 and shall make recommendations to the General Assembly regarding  
46 the availability and implementation of heating and water assistance  
47 programs that benefit low-income and moderate-income households,

48 including, but not limited to, the Connecticut Low Income Household  
49 Water Assistance Program.

50 [(c)] (d) The board shall elect a chairperson and a vice-chairperson  
51 from among its voting members.

52 [(d)] (e) The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection,  
53 or his or her designee, shall provide notice of meetings to the members  
54 of the Low-Income Energy and Water Advisory Board, provide space  
55 for such meetings, maintain minutes and publish reports of the board.

56 [(e)] (f) The Low-Income Energy and Water Advisory Board shall  
57 convene and devise recommendations to improve the availability,  
58 administration and implementation of heating and water assistance  
59 programs, particularly those created to benefit low-income households,  
60 through coordination and optimization of existing energy efficiency,  
61 water conservation and energy assistance programs. [Such  
62 recommendations shall consider: (1) How the Department of Energy  
63 and Environmental Protection, Department of Social Services,  
64 community action agencies, as defined in section 17b-885, electric  
65 distribution companies, as defined in section 16-1, and municipal  
66 electric utilities, as defined in section 7-233b, can securely share heating  
67 assistance program applicant data, with respect to customer energy  
68 usage levels, past participation and eligibility for energy assistance and  
69 energy efficiency programs, and other data deemed relevant to improve  
70 coordination among such programs and program administrators; (2) the  
71 costs and benefits of current energy assistance and energy efficiency  
72 programs and how to maximize customer benefits through such  
73 customers' participation in any combination of energy assistance and  
74 energy efficiency programs; (3) how to streamline the application  
75 process for energy assistance and energy efficiency program applicants  
76 and the possible development of joint electronic applications; (4) how to  
77 make energy assistance and energy efficiency programs more accessible  
78 and feasible for tenants in rental housing units, including, but not  
79 limited to, how to best secure landlord permission for such services; and  
80 (5) coordination efforts to best improve boiler and furnace replacement

81 programs.] Not later than [January 1, 2016] October 15, 2024, and  
 82 biennially thereafter, the Low-Income Energy and Water Advisory  
 83 Board shall report such recommendations, in accordance with section  
 84 11-4a, to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having  
 85 cognizance of matters relating to energy, appropriations and human  
 86 services.

87 Sec. 2. Subsection (g) of section 16a-41a of the 2024 supplement to the  
 88 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
 89 thereof (*Effective July 1, 2024*):

90 (g) The Commissioner of Social Services shall submit each plan or  
 91 report described in subsection (a) of this section to the Low-Income  
 92 Energy and Water Advisory Board, established pursuant to section 16a-  
 93 41b, as amended by this act, not later than seven days prior to  
 94 submitting such plan or report to the joint standing committee of the  
 95 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to energy and  
 96 technology, appropriations and human services.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2024</i>	16a-41b
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2024</i>	16a-41a(g)

**ET**            *Joint Favorable Subst.*

*The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.*

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**OFA Fiscal Note****State Impact:** None**Municipal Impact:** None**Explanation**

This bill redesignates the “Low-Income Energy Advisory Board” as the “Low-Income Energy and Water Advisory Board.” It relatedly broadens the scope of the advice and assistance it may provide to state agencies and adds reporting requirements resulting in no fiscal impact to the state.

**The Out Years****State Impact:** None**Municipal Impact:** None

**OLR Bill Analysis****sSB 384*****AN ACT CONCERNING THE LOW-INCOME ENERGY ADVISORY BOARD.*****SUMMARY**

This bill redesignates the “Low-Income Energy Advisory Board” as the “Low-Income Energy and Water Advisory Board.” It relatedly broadens the scope of the advice and assistance it may give state agencies and adds reporting requirements.

More specifically, the bill requires the board to make recommendations to the General Assembly on the availability and implementation of heating and water assistance programs that benefit low-income and moderate-income households, including the Connecticut Low Income Household Water Assistance Program. It also requires the board to come together and work out recommendations to improve the availability, administration, and implementation of heating and water assistance programs (particularly those created to benefit low-income households) by coordinating and optimizing existing energy efficiency, water conservation, and energy assistance programs. The board must biennially, beginning by October 15, 2024, report this second set of recommendations to the Energy and Technology, Appropriations, and Human Services committees.

The bill also authorizes the board to advise and assist the Office of Policy and Management (OPM), Department of Social Services (DSS), and Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) in the planning, development, implementation, and coordination of water-assistance-related programs and policies, including those to alleviate the impact of utility rates. Under existing law, unchanged by the bill, the board must advise and assist OPM and DSS on energy-assistance-related programs and advise DEEP on the impact of utility rates and

policies.

Additionally, the bill replaces one of the board's 24 members, replacing the Legal Assistance Resource Center of Connecticut's executive director with a designee of Connecticut Legal Services, Inc.

Lastly, the bill makes technical and conforming changes, including making Operation Fuel's chief executive officer, rather than its executive director, a board member and removing an obsolete reporting provision.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Energy and Technology Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 20 Nay 0 (03/21/2024)